THE CRYPT OF TERROR

"THE PEOPLE OF BERLIN HAD DESERTED THE PARK THAT RAW DECEMBER DAY. THE LEAFLESS, SLEEPING TREES .. THE FORSAKEN BIRD-NESTS.. THE HARD, FROZEN EARTH LAYING LIKE A DEAD WOMAN AWAITING A SNOWY SHROUD— ALL GAVE ANNA AND I THE PRIVACY FOR A RENDEZVOUS."

THIS IS *GOODBYE*, ANNA? THEN LET US HAVE A *FAREWELL KISS!*

I *MEAN* IT THIS TIME, EMIL! I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

"I'D HAD THIS BUSINESS BEFORE WITH ANNA. SHE'D SAY WE WERE THROUGH.. BUT THE NEXT DAY SHE'D COME CRAWLING BACK TO ME! THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THERE WAS A COLDNESS, A *FINALITY* IN HER VOICE...THAT I FOUND HARD TO BELIEVE.."

ANNA, YOU *DON'T* MEAN IT! YOU'LL COME *BACK* TO ME...LIKE *ALWAYS!*

NO, EMIL! I'M GOING TO TELL MY HUSBAND *EVERYTHING!* I'M GOING TO BEG HIS FORGIVENESS! HE *LOVES* ME!

DON'T TALK LIKE A FOOL! YOU COULD *NEVER* GIVE ME UP! YOU...*OW!*

IT'S OVER! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? WE'RE *THROUGH!*

"I DON'T KNOW WHY OR HOW I SUDDENLY BECAME SO ENRAGED! BEFORE I REALIZED WHAT I WAS DOING, I GRABBED THE SCARF-ENDS AND DREW THEM TIGHTLY ABOUT HER THROAT..."

ALL RIGHT, ANNA.. THEN IT'S *OVER!*

"A MOMENT LATER SHE SLUMPED TO THE GROUND— AND STILL I TWISTED THE SCARF TIGHTER EVEN THOUGH I HEARD THE HEAVY POUNDING OF FEET BEHIND ME.."

"HUGE, POWERFUL HANDS YANKED ME AWAY FROM THE LIMP BODY AND SPUN ME AROUND! A GREAT FIST SLAMMED AGAINST MY HEAD WITH THE FORCE OF A SLEDGE-HAMMER!"

WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* TO HER? WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* TO MY *WIFE!?*

"DIMLY, I SAW THE MAN CRADLE ANNA IN HIS ENORMOUS ARMS, VAGUELY, I REALIZED THAT HE WAS *HEINRICH*.. ANNA'S *HUSBAND!* THROUGH THE THROBBING ACHE IN MY HEAD, I HEARD HER MOURNFUL SOBS— AND SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, I TRIED TO CRAWL AWAY.."

ANNA— (SOB) MY ANNA! WHERE HAVE I *FAILED* YOU?

"I HAD HARDLY GONE FIFTEEN FEET WHEN THE GREAT BRUTE WAS UPON ME, PULLING ME UP AS IF I WERE A RAG-DOLL! I COULD SEE THE HATE DEEP IN HIS TEAR-REDDENED EYES...THE LIVID SCAR ON HIS CHIN..."
I COULD KILL YOU, MISTER! I COULD SNAP YOUR FILTHY NECK WITH ONE HAND...BUT THERE WILL BE A WORSE WAY... I PROMISE YOU!
YOU...YOU SHOULD THANK ME! SHE... SHE WAS NO GOOD!
"HEINRICH SLAMMED HIS CALLOUSED PAW AGAINST MY MOUTH! MY LIPS BECAME NUMB AND SWOLLEN ALMOST AT ONCE, AND I COULD FEEL WARM BLOOD FROM WHERE THEY WERE TORN, TRICKLING DOWN MY CHIN..."
LIAR! MY ANNA IS DEAD! I HAVE NOTHING TO LIVE FOR NOW...NOTHING BUT TO SEE YOU SUFFER AND DIE!
"I CAN HARDLY RECALL THE FRIGHTFUL FANTASY OF MY TRIAL. HEINRICH WAS THERE, STARING AT ME! I TRIED NOT TO LOOK AT HIM, BUT I FELT HIS SMOULDERING EYES ON ME EVERY AGONIZING MOMENT
"I WAS FILLED WITH RELIEF WHEN I AT LAST RECEIVED MY SENTENCE..."
...AND ON A DAY CONVENIENT TO THE HEAD WARDEN, YOU, EMIL VOIGT, WILL BE PUT TO DEATH...
"IN MY CELL I THOUGHT OF MY DEATH AND IT SEEMED UNREAL...IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO ME! THEN, ONE DAY..."
EMIL VOIGT! YOU HAVE A VISITOR!
"I RECOGNIZED HIM AT ONCE BY THE BIG SCAR ON HIS CHIN, AND THOSE HATE-FILLED EYES THAT GLARED THROUGH THE SLOTS IN HIS EXECUTIONER'S MASK..."
HEINRICH! YOU...YOU ARE THE EXECUTIONER!
ANNA DIDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT MY JOB, EH? BUT DON'T TREMBLE SO! YOUR TIME HAS NOT COME...YET!
I HAVE TO EXECUTE A MAN IN A LITTLE WHILE, SO I CAN ONLY SPARE A FEW MINUTES! HAVE YOU EVER SEEN AN EXECUTION, VOIGT? LET ME TELL YOU HOW IT GOES!
NO...NO, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR! GO AWAY!

"MENTALLY, I TRIED TO DEAFEN MYSELF, BUT HIS WORDS BURNED INTO MY BRAIN. I FOUGHT NOT TO LOOK, YET I COULD NOT TEAR MY EYES FROM THE GLEAMING, RAZORED AXE..."
I SPEND THE NIGHT BEFORE HONING MY AXE SO IT WILL BE OVER QUICKLY FOR THE DOOMED MAN.. UNLESS IT HAPPENS TO BE SOMEONE I DON'T LIKE! THEN I AM HAPPY TO WASTE THREE OR FOUR STROKES TO PROLONG THE AGONY!
"I COVERED MY EARS... AND STILL I HEARD..."
...FIRST I GO TO MY VICTIM'S CELL, AND IN MY MOST SOMBRE VOICE, I CALL HIM! SOMETIMES HE WILL WALK WITH ME...OTHER TIMES HE WILL BE DRAGGED, CLAWING AND SCREAMING!
... AND AS YOUR HEAD TUMBLES INTO THE WAITING BASKET, BEFORE THE DARKNESS CLOSES IN, YOU'LL SEE YOUR NECK... GHASTLY RAW FLESH, SPLINTERED BONE, THE RED BLOOD GUSHING OUT...!
STOP IT! STOP IT!
IT IS SOMETHING FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT, VOIGT! WHEN YOUR TIME COMES, YOU'LL KNOW I'LL ONLY BE THINKING OF ANNA, AND HOW LONELY I AM, AND HOW GOOD IT WILL BE TO JOIN HER... AFTER I HAVE FINISHED WITH YOU!
"I FELL UPON MY BUNK IN A COMA-LIKE SLEEP, EXHAUSTED BY THE HORRENDOUS EXPERIENCE TO WHICH HEINRICH HAD SUBJECTED ME..."
"I DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG I SLEPT, BUT SUDDENLY, THROUGH THE MIST OF MY UNCONSCIOUS, I HEARD HIS VOICE CALLING ME. HE CALLED AGAIN, LOUDER.."
COME, EMIL VOIGT!
IS IS IT (GASP) NOW?
"MY INSIDES QUIVERED LIKE COLD JELLY, AND MY LEGS WERE RUBBERY BENEATH ME, BUT I WAS FIERCELY DETERMINED NOT TO SHOW HIM MY FEAR. NOT TILL I LAID EYES ON THE BLOODSTAINED BLOCK... NOT TILL THEN DID I WEAKEN..."
NO! NO! PLEASE!
TO THE BLOCK, EMIL VOIGT!

"HEINRICH BRUSQUELY SHOVED ME DOWN ON MY KNEES AND ADJUSTED MY HEAD ON THE BLOCK! I GLANCED UP AND SAW THE MIGHTY SWELLING OF HIS BICEPS AS HE RAISED THE AXE! IT GLINTED IN THE SUNLIGHT..."

"IT WAS DULL, THAT BLADE, AND THE BLOW BADLY AIMED! I COULD HEAR HIM LAUGH, THROUGH MY AGONY, AS HE BROUGHT THE AXE DOWN *AGAIN AND AGAIN*... AND I WOKE UP FROM THE SOUND OF MY OWN SCREAMS!"

OOOHH.. I'VE ..I'VE BEEN *DREAMING!*

"I WAS FRIGHTENED. THE NIGHTMARE HAD CLEARLY FORTOLD THE AGONIES I WOULD ENDURE AT HEINRICH'S HANDS, AND I WAS POSSESSED WITH DREAD..."

"HAD I KNOWN I WOULD *DREAM* AGAIN, I WOULD NEVER HAVE *SLEPT* THAT NIGHT..."

COME, EMIL VOIGT!

"HE SEIZED MY CHAINS AND DRAGGED ME, STRUGGLING AND SCREAMING, THROUGH THE CORRIDOR OF THE DAMNED...

"I RANTED AND KICKED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY! TWO ASSISTANTS WERE NEEDED TO HOLD MY HEAD DOWN TO THE CHOPPING BLOCK..EVEN *AFTER* THE FIRST BLOW OF THE DULL BLADE..."

"AGAIN I AWOKE SCREAMING! SWEAT BEADED MY SKIN... AND THE BACK OF MY NECK ACHED! TREMBLING, I TRIED TO LIGHT A CIGARETTE..."

A DREAM! A BLASTED *DREAM!* IT'S DRIVING ME *CRAZY!* WHY DON'T THEY GET IT OVER WITH?!

"THE DAYS AND NIGHTS PASSED ENDLESSLY IN A WHIRL OF HORRIFYING NIGHTMARES AND THOUGH I FOUGHT TO STAY AWAKE, MY WAKING THOUGHTS OFFERED NO RELIEF..."
"I LIVED IN AN HYSTERICAL DELIRIUM, HARDLY KNOWING WHEN I WAS CONSCIOUS, BEING AWARE ONLY OF HOW I WAS LED TO THE BLOCK TIME AND AGAIN I WAS TOO NUMB TO FEEL FEAR. I COULD ONLY FEEL THE TERRIBLE BLOWS, THE CRUSHING OF BONES, THE CHOCK OF THE AXE IN MY FLESH..."
"INSIDE I ACHED FROM THE TORMENTS OF MY REPEATED DREAMS. I LONGED FOR DEATH... SWEET UNKNOWINS, UNFEELING DEATH..."
"I PRAYED FOR DEATH! I WELCOMED IT WITH OPEN ARMS FOR I KNEW IT WAS THE ONLY MEANS OF MY ESCAPING THIS TORTURE..."
"AND THEN AT LAST, IT WAS TIME..."
COME, EMIL VOIGT.
AT LAST! IT WILL BE OVER SOON!
"I WALKED TO DEATH WITH A SMILE. I WAS HAPPY KNOWING THIS WAS THE REAL THING! HEINRICH SAW MY JOY, AND HE SCOWLED AT ME IN SPEECHLESS FURY"
YOU LOSE, HEINRICH! YOU CAN'T HURT ME ANYMORE! IN A FEW MOMENTS, I'LL BE FREE OF YOU!
"IT WAS SOMETHING I HAD NOT COUNTED ON OR HOPED FOR... HEINRICH LOST HIS TEMPER! HE BROUGHT THE GREAT AXE DOWN WITH ALL HIS MIGHT! ONE QUICK, SHARP PAIN.. AND IT WAS OVER!"
THOK
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"DO YOU THINK ONE DOES NOT KNOW WHEN HE HAS CROSSED THE BARRIER? I KNEW. I KNEW HEINRICH LIFTED MY HEAD FROM THE BASKET, AND THAT HE WAS INFURIATED BECAUSE HE COULD HURT ME NO MORE."

IT WAS TOO EASY, VOIGT!
TOO EASY, DO YOU HEAR?

"I KNEW WHEN THEY SEWED MY HEAD BACK ONTO MY BODY, AND WHEN THEY CARTED ME OFF IN AN OLD WAGON, WHEN THEY BURIED ME IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE, I KNEW WHEN HEINRICH EMPTIED THE POISON DOWN HIS BULL-LIKE THROAT."

I'M COMING, ANNA! I'M COMING!

"...AND THEN I HEARD THE VOICE, THE SAME VOICE, THE TERRIBLE, HAUNTING VOICE I HAD HEARD SO OFTEN..."

COME, EMIL VOIGT!

"IT WAS A CALL I COULD NOT RESIST. I ROSE TO ANSWER IT...AND FACED HIM...*HEINRICH, MY EXECUTIONER...*"

COME, EMIL VOIGT! *NO!* (GASP!) *NO! NO!*

"...AND I REALIZED NOW THAT I WAS TO SPEND AN ETERNITY PAYING, *OVER AND OVER AGAIN WITHOUT END*, FOR ANNA'S MURDER..."

THE END

HEH, HEH! A WEE BIT ON THE *GORY* SIDE, EH, KIDDIES? YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT THAT EMIL HAD A *HEAD* FOR BUSINESS...HEH... *MONKEY BUSINESS!* WELL, IF YOU'RE STILL IN THE *MOOD* FOR *MORBIDITY*, STICK AROUND... *V, K'S* READY WITH MORE, SO *TOODLE-BOO* FOR NOW!